01693

1966/03/10

~~TOP SECRET~~

THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-153-66

10 MAR 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Air Operations Against North Vietnam (U)

1. (TS) In JCSM-41-66, dated 18 January 1966, subject as above, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended a program of air strikes against North Vietnam (NVN) as an essential component of military strategy with respect to South Vietnam. That program was restated most recently in JCSM-130-66, dated 1 March 1966, subject: "CY 1966 Deployments to Southeast Asia and World-wide US Military Posture (S)," in connection with CY 1966 deployments of forces to Southeast Asia. Certain elements of that program have been approved and are being executed. Among those not yet approved is the early destruction of the NVN POL storage system, to be followed by measures against the import of bulk petroleum and other war-supporting materials. This memorandum reaffirms the views and recommendations of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on those elements of the program not yet approved, specifically as they relate to the recent recommendations by Ambassador Lodge and CINCPAC concerning mining the approaches to Haiphong harbor.

2. (TS) Because of the immediate effect upon the NVN ability to move war-supporting materials both within the country and southward through the infiltration routes, destruction of the known POL storage system is considered to be one of the higher priority actions not yet approved. As was examined in detail in JCSM-810-65, dated 10 November 1965, subject: "Air Operations Against the North Vietnam POL System (S)," and JCSM-914-65, dated 30 December 1965, subject: "Attack Against Haiphong Petroleum Storage Area, JCS Target No. 48 (S)," that capability is heavily dependent upon the government-operated POL-powered transport system. The magnitude of the effort exerted by the NVN, with the assistance of the communist nations, to expand and improve LOCs, to

RL 94-F-0305 94-TS-13

DECLASSIFIED
NND941082
HRM/JCC 4/26/96

Copy 7 of 9 copies each
of 2 pages series "A"

Reproduction of this document in whole or in part is prohibited except with permission of the issuing office.

GROUP 3
Downgraded at 12 year intervals; not automatically declassified

~~TOP SECRET~~

941082-128

increase the flow of war material to the south, and to improve offensive and defensive air capabilities indicates that preparations are being made for the possible exercise of a wider range of communist initiatives and options than have been previously feasible. These considerations, plus the recently reported requests by the NVN for expedited delivery of additional trucks, indicate that POL will become increasingly significant to the NVN war effort.

3. (TS) Actions to restrict imports, including closure of the Haiphong harbor approaches by mining, would be substantially more effective with respect to POL after stockpiles had been destroyed, since stockpile capacity is large in relation to consumption. These actions are next in priority after stockpile destruction, because, so long as POL imports remain unrestricted, the loss of major storage stockpiles could be compensated for relatively quickly. The political sensitivity of NVN harbor mining should have diminished as a result of the recent Viet Cong attacks on shipping in the Saigon channel.

4. (TS) The Joint Chiefs of Staff therefore recommend that the total air campaign against NVN described in JCSM-41-66 be approved, with earliest attack of the NVN POL storage target system, to be followed by interdiction of the principal LOCs from China and closure of the deep-water ports by mining.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

SIGNED

EARLE G. WHEELER
Chairman
Joint Chiefs of Staff

01000129